

Joseph Spencer DeJarnette, "MENDEL'S LAW, A PLEA FOR A BETTER RACE OF MEN"
(written in the early 1920s)

Joseph S. DeJarnette was a physician and eugenicist who performed hundreds of involuntary sterilizations at Western State Hospital in Staunton, Virginia. DeJarnette's early career fit patterns of Progressive reform and he modernized treatment of patients as superintendent of the hospital. He also began to advocate for forced sterilizations, which he believed would improve society. DeJarnette testified in Buck v. Bell (1927), in which the U.S. Supreme Court upheld Virginia's sterilization statute. He took pride in the state's aggressive approach to sterilization, but felt the state was not acting fast enough and publicly admired Nazi Germany's more ambitious plan. DeJarnette defended sterilization and racial segregation until his death in 1957.

- Oh, why are you men so foolish —
 - You breeders who breed our men
 - Let the fools, the weaklings and crazy
 - Keep breeding and breeding again?
 - The criminal, deformed, and the misfit,
 - Dependent, diseased, and the rest —
 - As we breed the human family
 - The worst is as good as the best.
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- Go to the house of some farmer,
 - Look through his barns and sheds,
 - Look at his horses and cattle,
 - Even his hogs are thorough bred;
 - Then look at his stamp on his children,
 - Low browed with the monkey jaw,
 - Ape handed, and silly, and foolish —
 - Bred true to Mendel's law.
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- Go to some homes in the village,
 - Look at the garden beds,
 - The cabbage, the lettuce and turnips,
 - Even the beets are thoroughbreds;
 - Then look at the many children
 - With hands like the monkey's paw,
 - Bowlegged, flat headed, and foolish —
 - Bred true to Mendel's law.
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- This is the law of Mendel,
 - And often he makes it plain,
 - Defectives will breed defectives
 - And the insane breed insane.
 - Oh, why do we allow these people
 - To breed back to the monkey's nest,
 - To increase our country's burdens
 - When we should only breed the best?

- Oh, you wise men take up the burden,
- And make this your loudest creed,
- Sterilize the misfits promptly —
- All not fit to breed!
- Then our race will be strengthened and bettered,
- And our men and our women be blest,
- Not apish, repulsive and foolish,
- For the best will breed the best.